

House Transportation Committee

October 02, 2011

HB 5125/5126

Kent County Road Commission

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In 1909 legislation was adopted to provide county voters the option to create their own County Road Commission. The concept was formulated based upon the successful 1905 legislation that provided for the Michigan State Highway Department. As a result, independent road agencies at the state and county level were created to provide single focus transportation services though out the state, free of political intervention and territorial boundary disputes.

For more than 100 years, County Road Commissions have managed road and bridge maintenance and construction on the largest net work of roads in the state- **the county road system**. Yes, there have been bumps along the way, but to paraphrase an old axiom “**you can please all of the elected officials some of the time and some of the elected officials all the time – but you cannot please all of the elected officials all of the time**”. So why are we here today?

If the goal of this legislation is to follow through on a mandate to consolidate local agencies at any cost, then you have an easy task. **But if your goal is to provide the highest quality of county transportation services possible to your constituents**, then you need to invest the time to hold a series of advertised meeting around the state to investigate of the pros and cons of providing an alternate organizational structure for County Road Commissions. This is too major an issue for everyone involved to not obtain broad based opinions and make certain that your actions are providing a better alternative, regardless if it is permissive or mandatory.

The takeover by a county of an under funded County Road Commission system will create false optimism for county residents and motorist unless the county is prepared to contribute their general fund monies to address present and future road needs. **Adequate funding is the issue needing your immediate attention and County Boards should demand HB 5125 and 5126 be passed only if tie barred to a new funding package.**